

A M E R I C A,

HISTORICAL, STATISTIC, AND DESCRIPTIVE.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

, VOL. III.

1841.

FISHER, SON, & CO.

NEWGATE ST. LONDON; RUE ST. HONORÉ, PARIS.

1136.

the same class and character as the original Puritans, resorted to New England as a place of refuge. Here they kept up, by their influence in society, the same rigid spirit as that which had hitherto directed the councils and influenced the opinions and manners of its inhabitants; while, by the fresh impetus thus given to the emigration of conscientious laymen, a body of men were introduced into the country, whose capital, industry, and intelligence, contributed to add greatly to its welfare.

In the year 1673, according to a document procured from the Colonial Office in London, New England was estimated to contain 120,000 souls, of whom 16,000 were capable of bearing arms; and of the merchants and planters, there were not fewer than 5,000 persons, each of whom were worth 3000*l.* sterling. Three-fourths of the wealth and population of New England centered in Massachusetts and its dependencies. The town of Boston alone contained at that period 1,500 families. Theft was rare, and beggary unknown; and Josselyn, who returned about two years before this period from his second visit to America, commends highly the beauty and agreeableness of the towns and villages of Massachusetts and Connecticut, and the substantial structure and interior comfort of all the private dwellings.

In 1660, some remarkable meteors having appeared in the air, one of which is described as "resembling the form of a spear, of which the point was directed towards the setting sun, and which, with slow majestic motion, descended through the upper regions of the air, and gradually disappeared beneath the horizon;" the magistrates and clergy

availed themselves of the deep impression which these signs created, to promote a general reformation of manners among the people. For this purpose, they published a catalogue of the principal vices of the times, in which were enumerated "a neglect of the education of children, pride displayed in the manner of cutting and curling the hair, excess of finery, immodesty of apparel, negligent carriage at church, failure in due respect to parents, profane swearing, idleness, and frequenting of taverns, and a sordid eagerness of shopkeepers to obtain high prices." One of the sermons preached at an election about this period, by a minister named Higginson, contains this remarkable passage, on the avidity of gain, which was then thought too prevalent a characteristic of the times, though it has not much abated, if at all, since:—"It concerneth New England," says this preacher, "always to remember that they are a plantation religious, and not a plantation of trade. Let merchants, and such as are increasing cent per cent, remember this: that worldly gain was not the end and design of the people of New England, but religion. And if any man among us make religion as twelve, and the world as thirteen, such an one hath not the spirit of a true New England man."

One of the most remarkable of the men produced by New England, William Phipps, appeared, not long after this, in 1688. He rose from the humble condition of a shepherd, to be created a baronet, and to be made governor of the colony of which he was a native. His biographer states that he followed the employment of a shepherd at his native place, till he was eighteen years of age, and was afterwards